REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1 and 5 have been amended to more clearly distinguish applicant's invention from that of Coleman et al. (United States Patent No. 5,065,768) and Koll et al. (United States Patent No. 5,129,402).

Coleman et al. (United States Patent No. 5,065,768) discloses a self-sealing fluid conduit and collection device. The device comprises of a fluid collection tube with a plug-end. The fluid to be collected enters tube through the other end. A plug of super-absorbent material is provided at the plug-end of the fluid collection tube. A vent channel is provided axially within the plug to provide an outlet for the gas displaced during fluid collection. As the fluid enters the tube and reaches the end of the tube, it causes the vent channel in the plug to swell and constrict. As the plug swells, it constricts and closes the vent channel and seals the plug-end. In one embodiment, an interphase gel sealant material is placed alongside the inner wall of the tube without sealing the tube. After blood has been introduced into the fluid collection tube, the tube is then centrifuged to separate the blood into its light and heavy phase components separated by the sealant material.

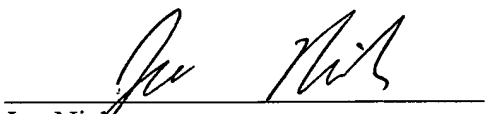
Koll et al. (United States Patent No. 5,129,402) discloses an apparatus for collecting and/or growing protected biological specimens. The apparatus comprises of an elongated outer hollow tubular member and an inner elongated rod. A specimen collector swab is mounted to the forward end portion of the rod. The rearward end portion of the rod is provided with a rearward extension which terminates at a finger gripping loop. A forward seal is mounted within the forward end of the tubular member. A second flex seal is mounted at the forward end of rod just behind the specimen collector. A third seal is fixedly secured to the inner surface of the

outer tubular member and includes a centrally located aperture to permit the inner rod to move slidably within the seal. The seals are preferably made of a medical grade silicone elastomer. A fourth seal may be mounted some distance behind the seal and is otherwise similarly constructed and fixed within the outer tubular member.

Applicant's claimed invention is a specimen collector comprising a hollow elongated tubular housing with a sealed end and an open end. An opening means in the form of a score line is provided near the sealed end. The specimen collector may be used to collect liquid specimen and subsequently release the specimen by allowing air to enter the hollow elongated tubular housing through the opening means. In one embodiment, a viscous substance is placed in side the housing near the open end. The viscous fluid functions as an automatically opening and closing valve to allow specimen to pass through it and subsequently automatically closes the opening through which the specimen passed through.

Applicant hereby submits that the claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) and (e) have been overcome. Applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Respectfully submitted,



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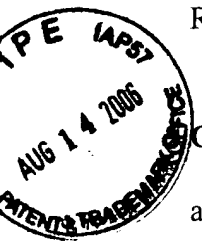

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